

CLAIMS

1. A process for forming tube-shaped hollow bodies (10) made of metal, particularly made of aluminum, with, after shaping of a slab-shaped semifinished product into a closed cross-sectional profile and straight seam welding of the opposing edges of the semifinished product, the tube-shaped hollow body formed being soft annealed and finally hydroformed in a die (14) by a medium introduced into the hollow body (10), **characterized in that** the tube-shaped hollow body (10) is first mechanically partially expanded and/or mechanically partially reduced in an upstream processing phase and is subsequently soft annealed.

2. The process according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the processing phases of mechanical partial expansion and/or mechanical partial reduction and subsequent soft annealing are performed multiple times in sequence.

3. The process according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** the tube-shaped hollow body (10) is also soft annealed before the upstream processing phase.

4. The process according to one of the claims 1 to 3, **characterized in that** the partial expansion and/or reduction of the tube-shaped hollow body is performed at those points at which the largest alteration of the cross-section after hydroforming relative to the initial cross-section occurs.

5. The process according to one of the claims 1 to 4, characterized in that further processing phases, such as mechanical bending and mechanical shaping, are performed between the processing phases of soft annealing and hydroforming.